

*With the Circumstances of each Fraud, and the Names
of all the Parties injured.*

THE
NORTHERN HERO;

Being a faithful Narrative of the LIFE, ADVENTURES, and
DECEPTIONS, of JAMES GEORGE SEMPLE, commonly called

MAJOR SEMPLE,

alias Major HARROLD, Major MAXWELL, Major GRANT,
Major CUNNINGHAM, Major WINTER, &c. &c. &c.

With an Account of his Devices at Lord SALISBURY's, Sir
THOMAS DUNDASS's, and Mr. PITTS's.

Also the almost innumerable Inventions by which he obtained
Goods of Tradesmen of every Profession, with the Particulars
of each Transaction.

The Whole supported by indisputable Authority, with the Names
of the Persons who were the Objects of his Depredations, and
the singular Manner of his Apprehension.

TOGETHER WITH

An ACCOUNT of his TRIAL,

Before Mr. Justice GOULD and the RECORDER,

At the OLD BAILEY, on Saturday, September 2, for defrauding
Mr. JOHN LYCETT, Coach-Maker, in Whitechapel, of a POST-
CHAISE, value FIFTY GUINEAS, of which the Jury convicted
him without going out of Court.

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JAMES ADAIR, ESQUIRE,
SERJEANT AT LAW,
AND
RECODER OF THE CITY OF LONDON,

SIR,

THE following pages are dedicated to
you, as the humble ^{mite} ~~mate~~ of an individual,
who has long been an observer of your conduct
in the high station to which your private virtues
and public merit have so justly raised you.

Your great concern for, and circumspection
in, the security of property, and the freedom of
the subject, have gained you a name which will
live as long as the Whig interest of this country
shall exist.—I am, Sir, with the most profound
respect,

Your obedient humble Servant,

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ERRATA.

Page 5, Line 12, for *acts* read *arts*.
Page 44, Line 2, for Mr. Feltham, hatter, in
Cheapside, read, Mr. Feltham, hatter, in *Fleet-Street*.

Page 8, Line 16, for *flatterers* read *flutterers*.

Page 11, Line 5, for *Prussian* read *Russian*.

Page 55, Line 20, for *persons* read *Jurors*.

THE
NORTHERN HERO,
OR THE
PRINCE OF SWINDLERS.

IT is neither a new nor a singular observation, that every century hath produced a Genius, and every country an Hero. There is no necessity to have recourse to the annals of the ancients, or to the multiplied instances of modern history to justify the assertion. France has had her Charlatan, and her Comtesse de la Motte. Jonathan Wild, and Mrs. Margaretta Matilda Sophia Carolina Rudd, may safely dispute the laurel with the Gallic Hero and Heroine: but Britain, the queen of isles, seems to be the natural soil for the cultivation of such genius and heroism.

A few years, however, have determined to whom the laurel wreath is due. We have had Ministers of the Church of England executed for forgery and murder, and a Methodist Preacher, in holy orders, hanged for ravishing dozens of young children, to whom he was school-master. Lawyers and Contractors have kept perjury in countenance, and the GREAT CHARLES PRICE, justly stiled *The Social Monster*, rushed into

the

the presence of his Maker, rather than have his genius recorded in the Ordinary's Calendar of Newgate Heroes.

The progress of heroism has led us into these observations. They prove, that a very few years have eclipsed the transactions of ages, and that England can boast of more renowned exploits in that short period of time, than ever were signalized throughout all Europe during the last century.

It was the reflection of a great lawyer, that the laws of this country were made to bind a *bold* and *daring* race of people. In his days, the refinements of modern villainy were unknown, and therefore unpractised. The name of SWINDLER, a creature begot between Downright Robbery and Dame Forgery, was unheard of.

It is also an established truth, that the powers of legislation can never keep pace with inventive knavery, the natural depravity of mankind baffling every attempt to deter it. The efforts of moral writers have been equally unsuccessful to restrain the vicious part of it from unprincipled dishonesty.—Thus whilst the absurdity of our penal statutes have opened doors of invitation to ingenuous chicanery, the scandalous and contemptible artifices of dirty pettifogging attorneys, and Old Bailey bar-orators, have given a loose and encouragement to every species of fraud and imposition.

To instance this.—An act of parliament was made, which decreed it a capital offence to steal horses, mares, or geldings. The first man who was ever tried upon that act pleaded the *singular number*.—As he had only stolen *a horse*, he was — Acquitted.—It was a penal statute, and not to be *liberally* construed.—The *text* was to be strictly adhered to.

To prevent the receiving of stolen goods, knowing them to have been stolen, in the enumeration of the articles, watches were omitted. They are held not to come under the description of goods, plate, wares, or merchandize: a receiver of stolen goods may therefore purchase as many watches as he pleases, of whom he pleases, and at what price he thinks proper !

In the act against dog-stealing, the magistrate has a power to fine, imprison, and order the immediate correction of the house. After conviction, and when the culprit's back has been flead, he may, by a very wise provision in that act, appeal to the quarter sessions to reverse the flogging !

Turnips may also be stolen with impunity, for they were omitted in the act that made it felony to steal any thing else out of gardens, fields, &c. &c.

It is well known also, that a man may set fire to his *own* house, and not be punishable by any statute law.

These preposterous absurdities and scandalous technical omissions call loudly for the interposition and inspection of the Twelve Judges, whenever a penal statute is framed. The various and curious labyrinths of the laws would then be reduced into a plain and easy road, nor would the incorrigible rogue find a *stimulus* from their subtle and encouraging constructions.

The only argument that ever was advanced against consulting the Judges on these occasions is, that they are servants and officers of the crown, *durante bene placitur*, and therefore ought never to interfere in framing laws, where the preservation of his Majesty's crown and dignity is concerned, as they may be supposed to be partial to their royal master.—To answer this flimsy argument is neither our business or design at present.

But though these legal inaccuracies and curious distinctions operate, in one sense, to the great disadvantage of the community, yet in another, they afford the most pleasing satisfaction, by protecting the life, liberty, and property of Englishmen. For if laws are ever to be construed otherwise than written, a partial and severe Judge, or a packed and corrupt Jury, might stretch the arm of resentment, either to serve their own private animosities, or to favour the designing views of an arbitrary and profligate administration.

The

The late Sir John Fielding, whose unwearied endeavours to check the progress of all sorts of vice, must make his name remembered with high respect, discovered, in his official capacity, the very great misfortune of what we now complain.—He daily experienced the triumph of villainy, especially in that line which is now the subject of this performance.—He applied to parliament, and with much difficulty he procured an act for the better prevention of frauds, (the 30th of Geo. II.) commonly called *Fielding's Act*, which secures the property of tradesmen from the pernicious acts of those public robbers, usually denominated SWINDLERS; for that which was then deemed but a debt, is now determined to be a felony.

To that magistrate, therefore, are the public indebted for the detection of that delinquent, whose extraordinary feats of ingenuity have struck so much alarm and terror throughout the private as well as mercantile line of life.—At the same time justice obliges us to add, that the exertions of Mr. Feltham, co-operating with the spirit of that act, have carried into effect an event that has for many years been most devoutly wished.

We must observe also, that although cultivated knavery is generally imputed to the southern inhabitants of this island, yet the perfection of the science was reserved for a native of North Britain.

After

After this exordium we proceed to our subject.

James George Semple was born about the year 1756, at Irvine, in the shire of Ayr, and is now about thirty years of age. He is the son of a Mr. James Semple, who was once a tide-waiter in the custom-house at Scotland; who is also living, but from some occasion or other, has *resigned* his place.

We were the more particular in this circumstance, not only as it satisfies our readers of the birth and parentage of our Hero, but also, as it leads to a circumstance that could not possibly be omitted, especially in a narrative of such great actions as we mean to transmit to posterity.

In the year 1547, the title of Lord Viscount Lysle, of the kingdom of Scotland became *extinct*. The reader may be assured it was not *attainted*. There is no record whatever of its disaffection to government, and therefore may be justly stiled as loyal a family as any that North Britain can boast.

The dormancy of this title has continued two hundred and thirty-nine years. The father of our Hero, James Semple, we hear, has lately laid claim to it. We mention this to shew that there is strong supposition of the dregs of very rich blood running in the veins of James George Semple. It also not only adds an importance and dignity to his

his character, but interests the reader a little more in his fate. To have a Hero the descendant of a long line of ancestry, is one great effort of modern tragedy; but without searching the histories of the Greeks and Romans, or rummaging the Ottoman traditions, we have *ipso facto*, such an interesting character from the highlands of Scotland. The phoenix of the family of Lysle.

His education was at the place of his nativity, Irvine; and it would be superfluous to add that he was soon made conversant in Latin and Greek. In those exercises, he had no competitor; his juvenile abilities soon distinguished themselves, and kept his school-fellows at an humble distance. We may add too, that as his years increased, some other eminent proficiencies kept them at a still greater. To be plain, most of the parents of the scholars of Irvine were under the necessity of directing their children not to associate with James George Semple.

As he grew towards manhood, an elegant figure, a person exceeding well made, and a genteel deportment gave him a pre-eminency in point of attraction. To these ornaments were added, an understanding capable of every improvement, and an affability of temper, so consonant to *the things that be*, that he was a most engaging companion, wherever he would introduce himself.

These

These qualifications, notwithstanding the others we just hinted at, whilst they procured him the envy and dislike of the male part of the creation, made him ample amends by the favour and esteem in which he was held by the females of all ranks, ages, and conditions.

One observation arises here. These tinsel attractions, and these flattering partialities of the ladies, are the rocks on which our youths have too frequently split. They are the Scylla and Charibdis of every young man, whose knowledge is like a whipt syllabub, and whose vanity leads him to suppose himself something, when in truth and in fact they reduce him to a mere non-entity. One deformed sensible good man, is of more service to society than a thousand gay superficial flatterers, with fine figures, even tho' they should be vulgarly honest. Ex. Gr.

To the partiality of the sex, we hear Mr. Semple was indebted for his abdication of Irvine; but we wish not to wound the vitals of suffering credulity in one sex, by exposing the iniquitous arts of the other; or to hang up the name of a lady, when we wish only to delineate the character of James George Semple. In order to improve his natural advantages, he was sent as we are informed, to the the college at Edinburgh, and intended for the Kirk, to which profession he was originally bred. He had not however been long there, before he gave ample proofs, that the study

of

of religion was not calculated for a person of his lively disposition and gay turn of mind. The study of physic was then proposed to him, but that science was too abstruse and technical to attract his attention. Law seemed to be his favorite amusement at college, and his father, determined to let his son take what course of study he pleased, agreed he should become a lawyer, no doubt with a view to prevent his becoming a rogue.

This reminds us of a repartee made use of by the magistrate whose name we have already mentioned. A fellow who made it a practice to pay six-pence for a basin of soup at various coffee-houses, and steal at the same time a silver table spoon, was at last detected. Sir John Fielding asked him what he was? To which the gentleman replied, "I belong to the Law, Sir." The Law! pshaw! damme! that's impossible said Sir John, "if you did you would have stolen the *basin* too."

How long he continued his studies there we are not thoroughly acquainted with, but we are informed that it is near nine years since his name was first enrolled on the lists in the black book of Bow-street, under the title **CHEVALIERS DES INDUSTRIES**. From this account we may draw a tolerable calculation that he had not been a considerable time in London, before he recommended himself to the notice and attention of the police.

We have it also from good authority, that he frequented every place of fashionable amusement, and was received by some families of distinction as a visitor, and as a gentleman of birth and character, whose father was claiming an extinct title; but how he supported himself, fame is at present not in the humour to divulge.

Tell me your company and I'll tell you the man is a very old saying. How far it was verified by Mr. Semple, the lowest capacity can judge. As there was no company in life which he had not entered into, from the plain gentleman up to the representative of Majesty, so had he contracted their principles, he must with his qualifications, have been an ornament to society; but as Shakespeare says, *Tow'ring ambition which over-vaulteth itself,* was the source of all his misfortunes. He would keep great company, which must be attended with a great expence; and in order to furnish himself with the means of supporting it, he was compelled to have recourse to great actions.

In the pursuit of his pleasures, it was a little unfortunate for a family of great character and respect in Devonshire, the G—ts, that he became their acquaintance. To the daughter of it, it was a most irreparable misfortune. She was married to him, and it was not long before Mr. Semple gave very convincing proofs how his noble

noble blood inspired him to maintain, unfulfilled, the honour and dignity of the house of Lyle.

It was from this connection however, he luckily obtained a recommendation to quit his native country. The Prussian service was proposed and embraced. The G——t family knew how very fortunate it might turn out for them, and they were happy to hit on any expedient which promised a restoration of their former felicity. Mr. Semple, therefore, departed for the dominions of the Empress, equipped with those requisites, which were accepted with as much satisfaction on one side, as they were bestowed with good will on the other.

Though it will be necessary here to state that the G——t family is allied to the once celebrated Dutches of Kingston; yet it need scarcely be told that that great lady has been a very great favourite with the still greater Empress of Russia, where the first great lady then resided.

To conceive that J. G. Semple would let slip so favourable an opportunity of improving his fortunes, would be but paying a very bad compliment to his penetration. As he knew the alliance, so he knew well how to introduce himself. Mr. Semple was a fine man, the lady had been a fine woman, and is still a great wit; she received him with hospitality, and promised to introduce him to the Empress. The promise of a court lady was never

yet violated. Mr. Semple was introduced, and promised promotion.

But strange was the revolution in the affairs of Mr. Semple.---A something, a destiny which we all are liable to, threw a stumbling block in his way.---The Duchess withdrew her favors, the Empress recanted her promise, and Mr. Semple decamped without waiting for the expected promotion.

The great action that was the spring of this event is not recorded, and perhaps, to the great mortification of the public, never will.

But although we are at a loss for so important a circumstance in the life of Mr. Semple; yet we have the pleasure of recording one small specimen of his ingenuity ere we bring him out of a country which was so unfortunate in his loss. He *borrowed* the passport of the King's messenger, then on his road to England, and by quitting the character of a gentleman, and assuming that which the contents of the passport afforded him, he got safe into Germany, where he talked in the language of the fellow upon Highgate-hill, who bid the Lord Mayor of London kiss his ——.

At Brussels he distinguished himself in a manner no ways derogatory to that assurance which had already made him pretty conspicuous in England and Russia. Whether the incident we are going to relate happened at this, or at a subsequent period,

period, we are not certain; be the time when it will, it makes but a very little difference to the reader. It is a fact, and therefore the order of time totally immaterial.

Baron Hompusch, a Russian nobleman, was resident at Brussels, when Mr. Semple arrived there, by which the latter had an opportunity of exercising those wits which seemed to have been his only support for some years. He addressed himself to the Baron with all the politeness he was capable of, and that was no small portion. He styled himself a Major in his Britannic Majesty's service, described himself of a noble family in Scotland, and boasted his great intimacy with the first of the English nobility; concluding with his relationship to the lady who had given him so kind a reception at the Court of Petersburgh.

Having thus stated his consequence, he then opened his misfortunes.—He had been so unhappy, he said, as to kill two English gentlemen, one at London, the other at Bath, in a duel. From his consequence and misfortunes, he then began to display his legal abilities.—The laws of England, he said, were very severe on the laws of honour, and cruelly deemed that a murder, which the laws of other countries took no cognizance of, and by this cruelty he was compelled to fly for safety to a foreign country.—His mind was exceedingly distressed, but he was much more so by the situation

tion in which his pecuniary affairs then stood ; and both those causes emboldened him to seek the support of a nobleman, whose soul was ever awake to the sensations of humanity, particularly when a gentleman and a distressed officer put in his plea to those feelings.

His manner, his appearance, his language, operated effectually on the Baron.—The eye of pity was thrown on so unhappy and so unfortunate a case. The Baron's purse bestowed the most liberal relief, and his house afforded a most comfortable asylum.—The Baron's friendship and services kept pace with the Major's misfortunes, and he promised to use all his interest to get him restored to his native country.

But this extension of friendship was not all that the Major prevailed on the Baron to exert—Mr. Semple wished to return to England with his Majesty's promise of a pardon in case of conviction ; for, added he, “ As a gentleman, and a man of honour, I must surrender myself up to the laws of the land, and take my trial for the murders.”

The Baron, who perhaps better understood the constitution of Russia, and some other northern nations than that of England, and knew that whilst the laws of the land was tying a halter round a man's neck, the monarch was tying round the ribband of some honorary order round his shoulders, readily consented to this request, and assured Mr. Semple,

Semple, he would use all his influence to procure the King's previous pardon, as soon as ever he should arrive in England, which would be in the space of two or three months.

To relieve the reader from any suspense which he may be thrown into, by Mr. Semple's narrative of duels he never fought, and of men he never killed, we must let him into a secret which it is not impossible he may have already discovered. The whole tale was an artful deception, trumped up for the mere purpose of living on the Baron's bounty as a man of consequence and fashion, which were always the ambition of James George Semple, Esq. Besides, as he knew that his happy effrontery and external appearance could support the character, so he knew that the only method of carrying his plan into execution, was to put himself upon a level with the Baron. We may be liberal to the poor and base born; but effectual relief and friendship are only extended to our equals.

In this noble state did Major Semple live at Brussels till the time of the Baron's departure for England, when the Major accompanied him, not in his suite, but as a friend and companion. On their arrival, the Baron mentioned the case to some of his Majesty's ministers, by whom he was informed; that the request was impossible to be granted, as all offences here were punished or pardoned.

cloned according to the merits of the case; and the favourable or aggravating circumstances attending it.

Soon after the Baron's arrival, it happened that Count Hompusch, the Baron's son, came from Russia to England with dispatches. After having negotiated his business, he was preparing to return; when the Baron advised Major Semple to accompany him, and he should have his recommendations there. This was readily agreed to, but a little delay proposed, in order to settle his private affairs in England. The Count would have been in the Major's company, but submitted to the mortification of failing without him. His luggage, however, was large, and as it could not be all got together by the time, especially as he purchased many valuable English articles, the Major kindly took charge of the remainder, which by some damn'd accident or other on the road, never got over to Russia, although as we are informed, it was worth between four and five hundred pounds. It is hardly worth our notice to observe that in a visit to Mr. Richardson, sugar-baker, of Stamford-street, over Black-fryar's bulge, with the Baron, he borrowed five shillings of Mr. Richardson's maid servant for want of change to pay a coach, and forgot to return it.

What became of Mr. Semple immediately after this loss, we are not positive, but we find him at Dieppe

Dieppe; in about a year afterwards, hiring an English fishing smack, there being no packet boat, for the express purpose of bringing over dispatches to government here, as he declared. For this conveyance he agreed to give fourteen guineas. When he arrived at Harwich, not having cash about him to pay it, and being also in want of money to pay the chaise to town, as he told the man, he borrowed six guineas of him (Mr. Thomas Welsh, living at No. 7, Gun-alley, Wapping) with whom Mr. Semple travelled over the ocean in the name and description of Colonel Crawford.

But a singular instance of his ingenuity ought not to escape us. It exhibits his address, and the fertility of his genius too powerfully to be suppressed.

He applied to Mr. Lovett, stable-keeper and hackney-man, of Stratton Street, Piccadilly, in order to send an express down to Lord Salisbury, near Watford. The express was sent, and contained an account of a near relation of her ladyship's and his own also, who, Mr. Semple said, was arrested for three hundred pounds, mentioning the person's name, and that sixty or eighty guineas would compromise the affair. This letter, by the express, was delivered to his Lordship, as he was riding near the house, but to which his Lordship returned this verbal answer, "*That he knew of no such person, or relation, and therefore there was no answer.*"

The obvious meaning of this express was, first, to make himself appear a person of consequence and fashion by his connections ; and, secondly, upon the strength of it, to get credit of Mr. Lovett. The scheme had its effect. He ran a few pounds into Mr. Lovett's debt ; who, having some little knowledge of the world, began to smoak the Major, and then put a *curb* to his credit.

Many and vain were his applications after Mr. Semple for payment. Fortunately he observed him one day in a hackney coach, and the Major, in his turn, smoaked Mr. Lovett. He kept himself, like a hare in his form, at the bottom of the coach, whence Mr. Lovett started him by opening the coach door.—Pleas, apologies, and excuses, flowed as freely as the Thames at a spring tide.—His Honour and his Maker he offered as bail for the performance of his promises, but Mr. Lovett would neither take the security nor part with his game ; and swore, wherever the coach went, thither he would go also.

When the Major found that there was no getting rid of his companion, he declared it was hard that he should be compelled to apply personally to his agents for a few pounds ; but as necessity had no law, if Mr. Lovett would accompany him to Messrs. Cox and Mair's, in Craig's-Court, Charing-Cross, he would pay him.

There

There is no doubt but Mr. Lovett readily consented to the proposal.—They drove to Craig's-Court, where he got out of the coach; and as Mr. Lovett well knew it was no thoroughfare, he continued at the corner of the court, and saw him go into Messrs. Cox and Mair's.

After waiting an hour he began to grow impatient. He enquired at the agent's for Major Semple:—They knew no such man:—But the servant maid informed him, that a gentleman, about an hour ago, had been there, and told her he was pursued by bailiffs, and begged her to let him escape through the house by the back door into Scotland-yard, which out of compassion she had done. By this double, Mr. Lovett lost his game, and never got scent again.

But the circle of his ingenuities were not limited to Barons, Counts, Watermen, and Hackney Coachmen; the Keepers of Coffee-Houses and Hotels experienced their pleasant effects likewise.

He frequented Wood's hotel, under Covent-Garden Piazza; and although Mr. Wood has, to our knowledge, too much good sense to be amused by the inventive genius of plausible pretenders, when their artillery is levelled at the purse, yet Major Semple proved an over-match for Mr. Wood's general prudence.

The Major came there one day, and desired to know for how many such a gentleman (the reader

must excuse our naming him) had ordered dinner? —Mr. Wood replied, “ He had had no orders.” —Good God! said the Major, Dick is a sad dog! How neglectful! Why, Wood, several of us agreed last night to dine with you to-day at seven shillings and sixpence a head, exclusive of wines. —Get dinner ready at five o’clock for a dozen. Mr. Wood was retiring to give orders, when the Major called him back: —Here, hark’ee Wood, said he, damme if I am not come out and left my purse on the table: —Lend me six guineas. Mr. Wood lent the money, the Major departed, an elegant dinner was dressed, but neither that sad dog, Dick, nor any of his party, came to partake of it.

We trace him likewise to a lodging at Knightsbridge with a Mr. Sadgrove, a hair-dresser there, in the name of Major Harrold. To Mr. Sadgrove’s he brought with him an elderly gentleman, whom he was pleased to stile his father, and to dignify with the appellation of Lord Lysle. —When Mr. Sadgrove apologized for the inconvenience he should be under in accommodating a nobleman —Pshaw! said the Major, put him into my bed, and make up one any how for me. —Thus were the nobleman and his son accommodated, till Mr. Sadgrove began to trouble his lodgers for some of those reasons which make all inconveniences trifling to the person who submits to them. —

But

But as Major Harrold was at a loss for that kind of eloquence, and as some few neighbouring tradesmen applied for the same sort of oratory, Mr. Sadgrove's lodgings began to be thought too far from town, and consequently the Major ~~was~~ moved, but without opening his mouth.

Many were the searches Mr. Sadgrove made to make him speak properly, but they were fruitless. Having at last traced Major Harrold, Mr. Sadgrove received from him the following curious letter.

Mr. Sadgrove,
I received yesterday from the gentleman who is with me, a letter which you meant for me, but which he opened owing to the address. I assure you that upon my word that before Thursday next I will pay you the money I remain in your debt; but I must beg you will not mention that I am in town to any body. I will call myself at your house and pay you. If I promise you sooner I may not be able to keep my word, but then I assure you I will not fail, but I beg you won't mention having seen me.

P. S. I again assure you that I will not fail on Friday afternoon.

Directed to Mr. Sadgrove, Hair-Dresser, No. 10, Gloucester-Row, Knightsbridge.

The

The reason of the Major's desiring secrecy is too apparent to need explanation.—But to do him all possible justice, we must add, that he kept his word with Mr. Sadgrove, and also declined putting him to any expence about the letter, as Major Harrold paid the porter, and indorsed it so.

Having done him that piece of justice, truth obliges us to add, that having a German servant with him there, of the name of Peter Frankin, he dispatched him to Ostend under pretence of preparing lodgings for him there, and who is now at Dusseldorf; having first in cash borrowed, and wages, stood indebted to the poor fellow near upon twenty pounds.

Nor was he less active during his stay at Knightsbridge among hackney coachmen than he had been with Mr. Lovett. Under pretence of wanting change, he borrowed of several the paltry sums of ten, of twelve, and fifteen shillings, which he never returned. If therefore, we compare them and the former circumstance together, we are afraid that we must conclude, that Major Harrold paid Mr. Sadgrove out of a principle of fear, and that he stands still indebted to Peter Frankin, from the principle of never having meant to pay him at all.

We must confess, however, that Mr. Sadgrove's luck was rather singular. Mr. Dalby, of New-Bond-Street, was not quite so fortunate. By the means

means of a fine carriage, and a fine insinuating tongue, he not only got trifles to the amount of six or seven pounds, but likewise obtained ten pounds in cash.

He did indeed, when he purchased the goods of Mr. Dalby, offer two guineas in part, which he said was all the cash he had about him; but then to take two guineas in part of six from a gentleman of Major Semple's appearance, Mr. Dalby was afraid might have been considered as ungentle, and perhaps construed into an affront: He therefore politely gave him credit for the whole, and without scruple lent the Major ten pounds more to it.

To Mr. Gladwell, wine merchant, No. 52, Piccadilly, he introduced himself as Major Semple, and said, he came recommended by the Earl of Kerry.—The purport of the visit to Mr. Gladwell was to purchase some wines, particularly tent, of which he understood that Mr. Gladwell had some that was very curious, as a present to Lady Coventry, who was most exceedingly fond of tent wine.—A quantity to a considerable amount was agreed on, and a carter sent in the afternoon to fetch ~~away~~; who, on Mr. Gladwell's enquiring, told him, that he had lived with the Major fifteen years, and he was a very worthy honest gentleman.—The wines were packed up and sent, and the

the Major came in ~~and~~ day or two to give a second order, but Mr. Gladwell having, from some little enquiry, learnt what was sufficiently satisfactory to him, declined executing the second order.

In the name of Major Campbell he also paid a visit to Mr. Johnson, wine merchant of Bruton Place, and had the pleasure of drinking that gentleman's health in some very fine flavoured claret and Madera.

But though his operations were daily directed against tradesmen, yet the nobility likewise were pestered with his impertinent assiduities.

He frequently wrote letters to Lord Salisbury, and Sir Thomas Dundas, in Arlington-street, in the name of Major Campbell, till directions were given by his Lordship and Sir Thomas, neither to admit or receive a letter from him. Defeated thus, he applied to the porter of the latter for the loan of half a guinea to pay for the carriage of some goods which were in Piccadilly, brought to town by a stage waggon, and which he could not send home directly as he had left his purse on the table.—*Tel maitre tel valet*—the party coloured tribe ape their masters, and the porter in this case profited by following the Baronet's example.

But though thus defeated at Lord Salisbury's and Sir Thomas Dundas's, his frequent visits there were the occasion of making him some trifling amends in the same street.—Greenwood and Hud-
son,

son, seedsmen at the corner of it; from seeing his frequent visits at both houses, made no scruple of giving him credit in the name of Major George, for several pounds worth of flower seeds, &c. From which we may draw this observation, that James George Semple was like a rabbit in a warren, no sooner out of one hole than he was in at another.

Nor were his dexterities less practised upon the publican than the peer.—Mr. Henderson of the Rose and Crown public house, in the Hay-market, had lived servant with a Captain Cunningham of the Royals, which by some means or other, Mr. Semple was acquainted with.—He came therefore one day in a coach to Mr. Henderson, saying he was sent by Captain Cunningham to borrow a guinea, and called himself Capt. Maxwell. The guinea was lent and also two shillings to pay for the coach. Had he upon that occasion asked for ten he might as easily have obtained it.

Another guinea he obtained of Mr. Carter, riding-master, of Chapel-street, Grosvenor-square, by pretending that officers had been after him to apprehend him, and he wanted to escape in a coach.

The same specimen of his abilities Mr. Lancaster, coachmaker, of Theobald's Road, experienced and under the same pretence, but in the name of Major Stewart.

Having taken a lodging at Mr. Lock's, No. 17, Upper Mary-le-Bone street, where he did not go by any name but that of the Major, Mr. Lock, in a short time discovered who his lodger was, and accosted him with a How do you do Major Semple? The Major moved off rather precipitately, leaving a trunk with a few contents behind him which just indemnified Mr. Lock.

Thus guilt makes cowards of us all. To Mr. Wetton of Bruton-street, confectioner, he gave a large order for confectionary, which was not executed, but though Mr. Semple failed in that, he was accommodated with half a dozen pots of sweetmeats gratis.

The reader, no doubt, has already seen that no situation in life was too high or too low for Mr. Semple to practise upon. From Baron Hompusch to hackney coachmen, mankind were alike to him; nay, a poor fellow of the name of Lucas, a porter at the Temple gate, he condescended to borrow six shillings of to pay a hackney coachman, under the pretence of having nothing but bank notes and bills about him.

Nor was Mr. M'Kenzie of the Rhedarian, Park-lane, more guarded against his enterprizes. Of him he obtained a carriage, and the hire of several, by the name of Major Winter. Fortune, however, stood M'Kenzie's friend. The Major having offered it for sale to Mr. Careless, master

of

of the White-Hart at Watford, who happened to know the carriage and owner, he sent to Mr. M'Kenzie, who came down to Watford, and issued out a capias against the Major, commonly known by the name of the Brewer's Law Writ:—The Brewer's Law Writ is this, when publicans don't pay, or are suspected of decamping, or for any other *reasonable cause*, the brewer sends his men, horses, and drays, very legally breaks open the cellar door, and very coolly draws away every beer butt therein. Mr. M'Kenzie, therefore, wisely took the same method, he sent his men and horses and brought the carriage back to the Rhedarium.

But although Mr. M'Kenzie was so far fortunate, yet he and Mr. Careless were joint sufferers by letting horses and carriages out for the Major's use.

Mr. Lycett of Whitechapel, a coach-maker, was, however, not quite so lucky as Mr. M'Kenzie—Mr. James George Semple, in the name of J. G. Harrold, obtained of him a carriage to use for a fortnight. If in that time the Major did return it, he was to pay Mr. Lycett for the use of it. If he did not, he was to give him fifty-two guineas for the carriage. The Major sent a pair of horses which brought it away, and he forgot ever after to pay for the use, or the purchase of it, or return the carriage.—Nay, the Major even forgot

forgot his way to Whitechapel. How far this little ingenuity comes under the statute of frauds will be seen hereafter, as the Major stands indicted for it.

Mr. Greensill, silver-smith, in the Strand, also experienced the address and dexterity of this singular genius. The Major had, by his usual dexterity insinuated himself into the opinion of a gentleman, an officer in his Majesty's service, a man of honour and honesty, to mention whose name would be cruel as well as indelicate. His own feelings at having been so imposed on, and which was the cause of several tradesmen giving credit to James George Semple, is a circumstance of sufficient mortification without any additional aggravation of ours.—At Mr. Greensill's they tossed up for some buckles, and in a few days after, on the strength of his having been in that gentleman's company, Mr. Greensill gave him credit for a few pounds worth of silver goods in the name of Major Cunningham. Luckily, he obtained no more. Had he desired it, Mr. Greensill would readily have credited him for fifty or an hundred pounds.

One general observation we beg leave to make; Wherever Mr. Semple attempted to obtain, or was successful in obtaining either money or goods, the imposition was founded on his real or pretended knowledge of some respectable character whom

whom he knew was acquainted with, or was a customer to the person he applied to, either to borrow cash, or take up goods upon credit.— This artifice was seconded by the deception of his own personal appearance, which added to the natural plausibility of his language, were as specious and as alluring as the Grand Deceiver's, who, by the *boney-dew* of his tongue, and, as Voltaire says, by the length of a shining tail, imposed on the natural credulity of the first frail fair. This will, once for all, account for his success in that line of Swindling, at which he was so complete an adept, and in some measure appologize for the credulity of those who have been sufferers through his adroitness.

As explanatory of this, we give the following fact.

He lately, and which the reader will see, with an assurance equal to his artifice, applied himself to Mr. Hankey, of Upper Harley Street, Cavendish Square, although a total stranger, and requested the sum of seventeen or eighteen guineas, which he said he was much in need of to assist a brother officer, who was then in custody for debt. To take off a little of the edge of a surprize which such a strange importunity might naturally occasion, he added, that he was a Major in his Majesty's service, and well known to

and intimate with Mr. Hankey's brother, or he would not have taken such a liberty. of tomorrow

As appearances were for him, Mr. Hankey said, that his brother would be in town that day, and would dine with him at five o'clock, at which time Mr. Semple was desired to call, and actually invited to dinner. To a man of less *non chalence* than James George Semple, this answer would have been a complete rebuff. But his motto was, “ *In for a penny, in for a pound.* ” He thanked Mr. Hankey, and boldly accepted the invitation.

At a quarter before five, having called in his outposts of humour, anecdote, tale, and repartee, and joined them with his main guard, *Impudence*, he knocked at Mr. Hankey's door.—The servants ushered him up stairs, and he was introduced to the Mr. Hankeys. The brother, whom Mr. Semple pretended to be so intimate with, professed he had not the smallest knowledge of him; when our Hero reminded him of this, that, and the other gentleman with whom Mr. Hankey had been at such and such places, assured him, that he, Mr. Semple, was often of the party, and lamented much the want of Mr. Hankey's recollection. The servant having announced dinner, they all sat down, and the Major began to file off his outposts. As his conversation was entertaining, they were in no great hurry to lose their visitor;

visitor; but when the subject of the visit came on the carpet, as men of business they declined the request.

So far unfortunate, Mr. Semple set his wits to work. A smaller sum, he said, perhaps would do to extricate his friend; and if Mr. Hankey would advance him five guineas, on a security of five guineas per annum on the Compassionate List at the Pay-Office, he was ready to give Mr. Hankey a draft on Mr. Thomas, at the office, who paid the money.

It being a case of some seeming compassion, interwoven with a delicacy in refusing a gentleman whom they had invited to dinner, Mr. Hankey advanced him the money, and Semple wrote the following letter.

S I R,

Mr. Hankey of Fenchurch-street, has been kind enough to advance me five guineas on my promise of giving no other order to receive the small pension on the Compassionate List but to him. I declare upon my honour that this is the only obligation I either have or shall give, and that when due to him and no other person—I will send the certificate.

I am, Sir,

*London, July 4, With much consideration,
1786.*

Your most obedient servant,

J. G. Semple.

Directed to

Mr. Thomas,

Pay-Office,

Whitehall,

London.

Now the truth is, he was not, or ever was on the Compassionate List.—In fact, Mrs. Semple was.—Nor could he even receive the money for her, unless she was present ; for, it being payable to Mrs. Semple, even her certificate, order, or power of attorney, would be no justification of the payment ; she must receive it in person ; and as Mr. Thomas knows and performs his duty with as much exactness as fidelity, he certainly never would pay Mr. Hankey on any such certificate of Mr. Semple's. We are afraid, therefore, that the consciousness of having done, what Mr. Hankey conceived, a generous act, must be his sole reward.

By contrasting this conduct with the following little specimen of his abilities, the reader must soon see the different degrees of light and shade in his composition. This same James George Semple, who could introduce himself to Baron Hompusch and Messrs. Hankeys, had been running about the town all day in an hackney coach, and by stepping into Mr. Francis Sykes's, in South Audley Square, under a pretended business, he bilked the poor fellow of his whole fare.

In short, the noblemen's houses he frequented daily under this device, made his person as familiar to the great as to the little world. The title of Major became as alarming as the appearance of a wolf at spa during the winter season, and the doors became equally guarded against his entering them. The comparison holds good, with this degree of difference; the wolf prowl at midnight, Major Semple ravaged at noon-day.

By this practice of his, the reader must observe that no character or reputation was safe when a guinea was the object of Mr. Semple.

Should any person be surprized at his success, we beg him to recollect an anecdote of the late celebrated Dr. Rock.

He was standing one day at his door on Ludgate-hill, when a real doctor of physic passed, who had learning and abilities, but whose modesty was the true cause of his poverty: "How comes it," says he to the quack, "that you, without education, without skill, without the least knowledge of the science, are enabled to live in the style you do?—You keep your town-house, your carriage, and your country-house; whilst I, allowed to possess some knowledge, have neither, and can hardly pick up a subsistence?"—"Why, look ye," said Rock, smiling, "how many people do you think have passed since you asked me the question?"—"Why," answered the doctor, "perhaps a hundred."—"And how many out of

" that hundred, think you, posseſſ common ſenſe?"

— " Possibly one!" answered the doctor. " Then," ſaid Rock, " that one comes to you; and I take care to get the other ninety-nine!"

In conformity to that doctrine, Mr. Semple met a repulſe in Mr. Clark, faddler, of Great Portland-ſtreet. He attempted to obtain two faddles by the name of Major Gray, an American officer; but Mr. Clark, being the one out of the foregoing hundred, declined the trouble of executing the order.

Mr. Cecil, ſhoemaker, of Leadenhall-ſtreet, was not, however, quite ſo much on his guard as Mr. Clark. He came to that gentleman in the name of Major Harrold, and ordered two pair of boots and ſome ſhoes to be ſent to him, by a ſtage-coach, down to Park Hall, whither he was immediately going. The order was completed, and ſent. Two days after, Mr. Cecil's journeyman eſpied Major Harrold at the Queen's Arms, Newgate-ſtreet. The major was confused, nay he even bluſhed. He deſired the man to make his compliments to his master, and tell him that he would call and pay him in a day or two, and begged that the man would not mention his ſeeing him to any body else, as he was in town on very particular and private buſineſſ.

At Meſſieurs Dixon and Co. of Aldgate, ſhoemakers, he played the ſame game as he had done with Mr. Cecil; but with these gentlemen he found

found the name of Semple inconvenient, and therefore assumed that of Major Kennedy.

In the name of Major Grant (pretending that he came from Petersburgh on an embassy to this court, and that he had business with Mr. Pitt) he had the same success with Mr. Stewart, perfumer, Broad-street, and obtained articles of perfumery to a degree that enabled him to completely stock the toilette of a fine gentleman; for which the Major now stands indicted. And to sweeten his tooth, as well as his person, he applied to Mr. Andrews, of Wimpole-street, fruiterer, and was no less successful in the name of Major Stewart.

Innkeepers also, as well as keepers of hotels and coffee-houses, experienced his usual diligence. Of Mr. Bolton of the Saracen's-Head, Aldgate, he borrowed two guineas in the name of J. G. Harrold, Esquire; which when he borrowed under the pretence of wanting cash to discharge some hackney-coach hire and charges for the carriage of goods, he wrote the above name in Mr. Bolton's book. On receiving the cash, the Major took the pen and defaced it, saying it was too trifling a sum for *his* name to remain in a book about. It, however, remains clear to be seen; and it is equally clear, that, trifling as the sum was, it still remains unpaid.

We have already stated that he obtained a carriage of Mr. Lycett, of White-Chapel, coachmaker. But as a horse to ride is of no use without a saddle, so a carriage is of no use without horses to draw it.

For this purpose he applied to Mr. Tattersall, of Hyde Park Corner, and purchased two horses, for which he gave a draft on Drummonds. The value of that draft the reader may readily guess. It was not worth the five guineas Mr. Tattersall lent him; for Major Semple had not at that time any loose cash about him, and he had also once more unfortunately left his purse on the table. The great convenience of these horses, were to draw away Mr. Lycett's carriage; and for a few days Major Semple lived in as splendid a style as if he had been on full pay.

Nor did Mr. Fozard, stable-keeper, of Park Lane, escape the Major's observation. Under pretence of extensive acquaintances and high connections, he obtained some credit, and borrowed a solitary guinea, which he was reduced to, he said, by losing his purse by an accidental fall from his horse. But Mr. Fozard having taken some little pains to satisfy himself about the Major, they were the means of producing the following letter from him:

I am Cursedly persecuted for the few things that I owe, which all together, even including yours, don't make forty pounds, the money I have spent since I have been in Town prevents me from having it in my power to apply for any more. There is yet a good sum due me, which I shall certainly receive before the end of the week or thereabouts, and even this day if I doth come up to Town I was to have had paid me a small sum which is

sufficient to clear me of your debt. I came yesterday down here where I mean to remain till I have satisfied the demands that are against me, an acquaintance who comes to London this day will deliver you this, he I hope will also receive the money for me, I expected. I beg it of you to be assured that I will pay you, the time is now drawing near on which I promised to pay every thing, sure no man was ever so much talked of or teased for so trifling a debt as mine are, there has been more pains took to hurt me, than ever there was any man. I can prove having spent and paid above 300l. in the first 2 or 3 weeks of my arrivall in London and what I owe as I told you before wont make 40l. the noise they have made has prevented them from being paid for they hurted my credit so much, that I am afraid to ask any body to assist me, I could easily have borrowed more money than would have cleared me if they had let me alone Mr. Dalby certainly was very kind to me at first but he talked a great deal afterward; however the assistance he gave me I shall never forget and most undoubtedly will pay him. I think I can trust to your not taking there example and you may be assured that I will pay you

I am Sir
Your most Obedient

Monday Morning 8 oClock A Servant in A

Woolwich J. G. SEMPLE.

PRAY DONT MENTION WHERE I AM.

Directed to Mr. Fozard,

The

The reader need not be reminded that this letter was not written at Woolwich, for the Major was then in the Spring-Garden coffee-house.

In one of his exploits, however, there seems to have been a momentary impulse of generous honesty. He had been rattling about the town, as usual, in an hackney-coach, and had, as usual, bilked the coachman, by leaving him and the coach in waiting in Windmill-street, near the Haymarket. He called at Mr. Skillern's music-shop, in St. Martin's Lane, the corner of St. Martin's church-yard, and begged Mr. Skillern would send up his man to tell the coachman not to wait, but to call the next day at Mr. Skillern's at two o'clock, and the money should be left for him. Mr. Skillern, although a stranger to the Major, (nor could he recollect him, notwithstanding the latter wanted to persuade him he had been a great customer) sent his man up, during which time Major Semple explained the reason by saying, He was pursued by bailiffs, and could not return to the coach. The coachman certainly called; but the above seeming momentary impulse of generous honesty never again influenced the breast of the Major.

A similar instance of his ingenuity he had practised on another coachman, who was more fortunate than his preceding brother-whip. He happened afterwards to meet Major Semple as he was driving his hackney-coach up Bedford Row, in company

pany with another gentleman, who, on the coachman's jumping off the box, thought proper to decamp. Having brushed up to the Major, and being determined not to quit him, the latter went to several houses in the neighbourhood to borrow the sum of *l. 13s.* but was so unfortunate as not to succeed. His wits, however, being pushed hard, he bethought himself of Mrs. Watson, a lady who lives in Gloucester-street, No. 42: thither he and the coachman went. He recollects that Lord Verney had lodged there. To this lady he applied, under the sanction of being his lordship's friend and having visited him there, for the above sum to discharge the demand: he promised the coachman at first to call the next day at Mrs. Watson's to leave the money; but this promise not being deemed satisfactory, and offering to go, the coachman resolutely, how legally is another thing, locked Mrs. Watson's door upon, and swore the Major should not march without he was paid. Mrs. Watson seeing the gentleman thus distressed, promised to pay it the next day if the Major did not. The coachman was satisfied, and departed, as did the Major with every promise and every apology he could suggest. Apologies and promises cost him nothing. He never returned, and Mrs. Watson was summoned by the coachman to the court of requests; and rather than appear at such a reputable and critical appendage to law and justice, she paid the debt.

Hitherto

Hitherto we have treated our readers with a few of his ingenious devices in the metropolis. His abilities, however, were not so circumscribed as to be confined to one scene of action. The country experienced his exploits in a manner no less diffusive than in town. The two following we select.

Having been obliged to a receipt from a very laborious season of public business, he took an excursion Northward. At Leicester he put up at the sign of the Three Crowns, kept by Mr. Bishop. Under the stale pretence of having left his pocket-book in town, he was, he said, unfortunately without cash to pursue his journey to Derby. Mr. Bishop, taking Mr. Semple for what he really was not, viz. a gentleman, generously accommodated the unfortunate traveller with five guineas, in order to enable him to pursue his journey to Derby, for which Major Semple as freely gave Mr. Bishop the following valuable security.

Leicester, Aug. 15th, 1785.

£. 5 : 5 : 0

At sight please to pay to Messrs. Coore and Swayne, or Order, the sum of Five Guineas, which you will place to my account.

W. BISHOP.

Accep'd J. G. SEMPLE

To J. G. Semple Esquire
Spring Garden Coffee House,
Ling of London.

Hd

Had the above acceptance been duly honoured, we never should have had the opportunity of taking a copy of it. We shall therefore dismiss this piece of ingenuity with observing, that the Major's expences at Mr. Bishop's (for he lived in some style) arose to as much as the draft, both which were satisfied much in the same way.

But, having travelled with the Major to Leicester, we beg the reader will march with us a little farther; and at Martlock in Derbyshire we will indulge ourselves with a halt.

At Martlock Mr. Semple found it convenient to stay a few days, during which time he ingratiated himself into the company of several gentlemen; two of whom we know, and on whom the Major exerted the utmost efforts of his avocations.

He soon scraped an acquaintance with a Mr. T—, a gentleman who lives in town; and having found out, as Scrub says, who he was, where he came from, and whither he was going, the Major opened his battery. He talked of his great services to government, his intimacy with the gentleman who is now the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Pitt; produced either a real or forged letter of that gentleman's to him; and, in short, conveyed into the mind of Mr. T. so high an opinion of his rank and consequence, that on his request Mr. T. readily accommodated him with ten guineas: but what the pretence was by which he obtained it we have forgot.

By way of killing two birds with one stone, as Major Semple had found out that Mr. T. was intimate with Sir Harbord Harbord, and pretended that he also had the same honour; no sooner had the Major an opportunity, than he fired his musket. He got acquainted with Sir Harbord Harbord under the cloak of an intimacy with Mr. T. and by that means squeezed out of the Baronet's purse between twenty and thirty guineas.

We have given the reader a short bait at Martlock, and now beg leave to conduct him back to Leicester, where the Major declined troubling Mr. Bishop. Perhaps he thought that a free horse ought not to be rode to death, and therefore he put up at Mr. Allamand's, the Three Cranes, where Mr. Semple appeared as great a gentleman as he had done at Mr. Bishop's, and where Mr. Allamand treated him with equal civility.

From Leicester the Major came to town, and as during his stay at Martlock he had been industrious in cultivating those acquaintances which were most likely to add to his respect and interest, so on his arrival here he was equally active in improving those two material circumstances in life.

Mr. R. a respectable bookseller of New Bond-Street, under the recommendation and acquaintance which Major Semple assumed with a gentleman, (whom he had honoured with his company in Germany, and thereby discovered that he dealt with

Mr. R.)

Mr. R.) lent him several guineas at different times for an equal number of ducats, which said ducats the Major left in pledge with Mr. R. but quite forgot ever to redeem.

Under a similar pretence he visited Mr. Jameson, bookseller of the Strand, in the name of Major Cunningham; and left behind him, recorded in black and white, a fact that reflects equal honour on his dexterity.

At Mr. Banfield's, woollen-draper, No. 444, Strand, the Major also gave proofs of his singular abilities, by gaining credit for cloth for liveries, &c. &c. And Mr. Chowles, hatter, in Duke-street, Portland-street, behind Portland Chapel, on the 5th of July last, was kind enough to leave a hat at the bar of George's Coffee-house, for the Major's use, directed for J. Wilson, Esq. to which was added—Pay nineteen shillings. When the Major's hand was in he might have wrote nineteen pounds: it would have made no difference to Mr. Chowles. But, as

‘ There is a tide, in the affairs of men,

‘ Which, taken at the flood, leads on to FORTUNE;’

so James George Semple, Esq. panting after the favours of so fickle a goddess, nobly plunged himself at last into the full tide, which safely conducted him into port; *id est*, his Majesty's jail of Newgate, from whence that said FORTUNE has so often dangled many a great man into eternity, with all the honours due to the important services which

he had so bravely lavished on his king and country. In plain English, the Major visited Mr. Feltham, hatter, in Cheapside, in February last; and in the following manner, as it appeared before the Lord Mayor, conferred the same favour on that gentleman he had so liberally bestowed on many others. He called at Mr. Feltham's, in a chariot attended by two footmen; and after informing Mr. Feltham of his having been recommended to him by Mr. Richardson, who he understood was his particular friend, he then produced a lady's riding-hat as a pattern for Mr. F. at the same time ordering him to make two of the same kind with all possible expedition, as he intended to take them to Russia, and at that time told Mr. F. that he was a Major in the Russian army.

Mr. F—, perceiving that the pattern which the Major had was made by him, agreeable to directions from Mr. Richardson, for Baron Hompish, a short time before, was satisfied that every thing the supposed Major had uttered was founded in truth. The Major, after giving his directions to Mr. F—, went away, returned the next day in a hackney-coach, and at going requested his man to call another coach. Mr. F—, at this, expressed his surprise at his changing coaches, observing to him, that, in consequence of the late regulation for hackney coaches, it must become very expensive. The other said, he felt it rather

an *uneasy* one, and had a glass in the back, which which was disagreeable to him. Another coach was then called, and the prisoner departed. That the next day he called again, urged the finishing of the two ladies hats; paid Mr. F—— some compliments on his superior style of cocking, and bespoke one for his own wear: he then told Mr. F. that he had a bill on a merchant in the city for a hundred pounds, and that he would then go and receive it. Mr. F. asked to see the bill, as in all probability he could direct him to the house, which would save the trouble of inquiring elsewhere: this he however declined, and departed. The next day he called again, said he had just arrived in his brother's carriage from the country, but that having drove at an immoderate rate up to town, and being obliged to return to dinner, would be under the necessity of hiring a chaise, as he could not think of harrassing his brother's horses; and requested Mr. F. to lend him three guineas in gold, and half a guinea in silver, for the convenience of paying the turnpikes. Mr. F. having light gold in his pockets, and apprehensive of its causing disappointment to the Major, borrowed three new guineas from his next door neighbour; which, with half a guinea in silver, he gave to the prisoner. On the Major's quitting the shop, a man at the door asked Mr. F. if he knew him; and on answering in the affirmative, was told by the stran-

ger that he was mistaken ; that he was Semple, the notorious sharper, but refused Mr. F. the power of making use of his name, which prevented Mr. F. from pursuing him at that time. Being however somewhat alarmed, he went to his friend Mr. Richardson, who he imagined had recommended him ; that Mr. Richardson denied ever having done so, and declared he would not trust him for a guinea, as he attempted to take him in for 40l. He then referred Mr. F. to Mr. G. of the Temple, who confirmed Mr. R.'s account of the prisoner, and recounted many other fraudulent acts of which he had been guilty. That from that time (Feb. 22) Mr. F. considered himself bound by an indispensable obligation, to bring to public justice a man who could, without remorse, make a profession of distressing the unwary ; and that from that time he had taken every possible means of apprehending the prisoner, which, by his steady perseverance, had at length proved effectual. That in the course of his inquiries after the Major, he had been able to trace out some of the most nefarious acts that ever disgraced an individual : having some time ago received intelligence of his haunts, he procured a warrant ; and after being repeatedly disappointed in apprehending him, as he was passing through Cheapside, perceiving a coach answering the description of that used by Semple, he instantly called to the driver to stop ; but without effect. He then pursued the carriage, and

and after a long chase attempted to leap in at the window; upon which the coach stopped, and the Major escaped out of the opposite side. Mr. F. pursued. The Major then took shelter in a banker's shop, where he remained till the arrival of the officers from Bow-street, who conducted him in safety to the Compter.

So eminent a gentleman being committed to prison, he soon became the topic of every company, and the public prints were equally as industrious to propagate his fame, as the world at large had been. We have selected the following, as it leads to a very curious reply of Mr. Semple's.

MORNING POST.

Mr. Feltham, who has spiritedly stepped forward to curb the industrious hero Major Semple in his career, assigned to the Lord Mayor as reasons for a second examination, that several other charges of the same nature, more forcible than his, could be produced. Above 120 persons attended, who proposed to prove a multitude of similar facts against the prisoner; but the Lord Mayor decided against the necessity of their appearance, as the case of Mr. F. was sufficiently strong in itself to support a prosecution, and ensure the penalties of the law to the offender. His lordship expressed his thanks to Mr. F. for the spirit he shewed in following up the delinquent. The groupe who suffered by the artifices of this genius, recited many and

and various exploits which peculiarly distinguished his ingenuity. Among several, he contrived to swindle to a town in Derbyshire, by *taking in* one side of the road on his departure, and the other on his return, in which he succeeded. He at another time assumed the character of an ambassador to the court of Russia, and nearly ruined an unfortunate taylor, who prepared for him a wardrobe to near the value of 400l. a considerable part of which was delivered. He travelled to Russia, whence the effects of his genius forced him to make a precipitate retreat to Sweden; from the capital of which his quarters were also beat up. In Flanders he succeeded upon the credulity of the public; and Calais did not escape the effects of his industry.

He is married into a family who are far from deserving the consequences of such a connection. He has a wife whose character is irreproachable, by whom he had two children: he abandoned her, and took up with an unhappy woman, whom he has brought to ruin.

The ANSWER.

To the PRINTER OF the MORNING CHRONICLE.

“ SIR,

“ I am too sensible of the difficulty of vindicating my character to make the attempt; yet I would willingly shew to the public, through the channel of your unbiassed paper, that I am grossly injured,
and

and that nothing can authorize the assertions which have appeared in the public prints, but the unhappy situation into which my follies (to give them no severer a name) have thrown me. Mr. F——, as yet the only person bound over to prosecute, has not hesitated to do his utmost to hurt me. He occasioned my appearing a second time at Guildhall, under the pretence of having twenty-three people to appear against me; but on calling over their names, two only were to be found. The whole of Mr. F——'s conduct towards me has been marked; during the examination of Mr. D. Shoemaker, (who could not make any story out) he went so far as to call to him in the presence of the whole court, "Don't you remember what you said to me this morning?" I remarked that circumstance immediately to the Lord Mayor; and, I believe, it had a proper effect.

"The papers have been filled with many different charges against me; the impossibility of answering them must be visible to every body; I reserve them for another occasion. Sometime ago a story, without any ground whatever, was fabricated, about my personating a certain noble Marquis, and swindling two maiden sisters out of their whole fortune, 1500l. This story, groundless as it was, and contradicted with authority, has again been repeated. It is also asserted, that I have nearly

ruined a taylor, by assuming the character of an ambassador to the court of Russia, and obtaining from him cloaths to the amount of 400l. May I beg to know the name of this taylor? and if the person who gave the intelligence is not, from motives of fear or shame, obliged to conceal his, I should be glad to be indulged with it. It is also said, that I was obliged to make a precipitate retreat from the capital of Sweden: in answer to this, I can only say, that I have been in almost every capital in Europe; the capital of Sweden I never was in during my life, and, as I have said before, it is almost the only one.

" I cannot suppose any other reason for filling the papers with these groundless charges against me, but the malicious intention of injuring me in the eyes of those who have some friendship for me, and the still more wicked one of prejudicing the judges and jury against me. I am sorry to confess, there are people who may with reason complain of me; Mr. F—— certainly with truth cannot. I declare I will do my endeavours to settle as soon as possible all the demands against me.

" I ought not to finish this without taking particular notice of the very humane treatment I have received from the Lord Mayor; the kind attentions of Mr. Miller, the city marshal, merit my warmest acknowledgments. Since my confinement I

have

have received every indulgence that the keeper of the prison can with propriety give me.

I am, SIR,

Your most obedient,

And very humble servant,

July, 18, 1786. J. G. SEMPLE."

To comment upon this would be making a parade of logical abilities, and a waste of pen, ink, and paper. It was our duty to give it because the *audi alteram partem* ought never to be departed from. One observation only we beg leave to make: the Major acknowledges having been in almost every court in Europe but that of Sweden, and that court he denies ever having been in. Mark the position; and then what, from his own assertion, is the natural conclusion? Why, that the *precipitate retreat* was not from Sweden, but from some other court in Europe; most of which he allows he has been at. When great men commit blunders, they are sure to be monstrous ones. Had Major, or James George Semple, Esq. or Mr. Semple, made no answer, it would have afforded no room to litigate his literary abilities.

But being now in *salva custodia*, and the Major left to his private meditations, we must beg the reader to drop him till the period of his appearance at the bar of the Old Bailey, which was on Tues-

day the 24th of July last, where he made his entré, with the Turnkey of Newgate on one side, and a certain knight of the post, vulgarly called Jack Ketch, on the other, to answer a charge made by Mr. Lycett; vide page 27.

The Major bowed to the court—he bowed to the jury—he bowed to the audience—three bows.—His honourable attendants, by the power of sensitive sympathy, bowed also.—They felt the force of attraction in—the neck. Whilst they bowed, a side-glance of commiseration darted on the Major, who blushed full as much as a modern made peer when introduced by two of his friends, at the bar of a still greater assembly, with all his blushing honours about him.

He marched majestically forward—He was called on to—hold up his hand! Degrading humiliation! Nothing moves one so much as a great man in distress! He was insulted with all the insolence of official interrogation, and asked, “How say you, JAMES GEORGE HARROLD, otherwise SEMPLE, otherwise KENNEDY; are you GUILTY of this FELONY of which you stand indicted, or not GUILTY?” Any answer to such a question, put to such a gentleman, would have been a derogation of character: nay, so truly pitiable was his situation, that it—moved the court; for, as Aristophanes says, in his Devil upon Two Sticks—“Up started little Belzy in the form of an able practitioner,” and said—

He

He humbly conceived that his client could not answer the question ; and by a delicate turn relieved the Major from the most poignant distress. This *delicate turn* was, A FLAW in the Indictment. This he prefaced with an observation, That it was his own wish, it was the wish of his client, to meet the indictment upon the merits ; and not to avail themselves of any legal inaccuracies. But from the complexion of this prosecution, or rather persecution, he thought it his duty to lay hold of every opportunity which could operate to Mr. Semple's advantage, (his counsel in this introductory address dropt the title of Major) and therefore he took an exception to the indictment. This objection, he said, was founded upon stat. 1. Hen. 5th, c. 5, which enacts, that in all Indictments, the party indicted should be described in the Indictment, with proper additions ; and he cited Hales P. Crown, B. ii. ch. 25, sec. 70.

He also argued, that this being an indictment for felony, it is a fatal fault to apply the addition to the name which comes under the *alias dictus* only, and not to the first name, though it is not material whether any addition be put to the name which comes under the *alias dictus* or not, because what is so expressed is not material ; but it is so great an error to omit an addition to his first name, that where several are indicted, such an omission, in respect to one of them, vitiates the Indictment

as

as to all: 1 Bulstrode 183, 2 Leonard 183, Cro. Eliz. 583, Dyer 88.

He relied strongly on Hooper's case, 2 Leon. 183; and cited several other authorities.

The judge, Mr. Recorder, observed, that the modern practice was uniformly contrary to the cases cited, but allowed the legality of the objection.

His counsel contended, that allowing the practice to be so, the Court ought to over-rule it, on its being shewn to be contrary to law.

Mr. Recorder admitted the practice to be against the objection; but thought the proper mode of objection would have been by plea in abatement or demurrer.

His counsel again contended, that where there was a wrong addition, the proper mode of taking advantage of it was by plea in abatement, where there was no addition, or the objection appeared upon the face of the Indictment, and in the present case, the addition being to the *alias dictus* only, therefore no addition, the proper mode of objecting was by exception.

He further contended, that if a word of substance be omitted in the indictment, the whole indictment is bad; but it is otherwise where a word of form is omitted, or there is an omission of an anonymous word when the sense is the same. 2 Hawk. 246.

The King v. Wheelhouse, *Popham* 208. An Indictment for frequenting a bawdy-house, and Serjeant Crawley moved to quash it as Insufficient; and among many other objections said, the Indictment stated that the defendant was *notivagus*, and it did not say that he was a suspicious night-walker. But Dodridge and Whitlock J. over-ruled this objection, and the defendant received judgment. *Hilary, 2 Car. King's Bench*; and it was determined in Willow's case, *Latch* 173.

Under all these considerations he moved the court to quash the indictment.

The Recorder thought the objection was well founded, and ordered that the indictment should be quashed accordingly.

In plain English, and to make this recital intelligible to men of common sense, as well as to lawyers, let it be understood, that the prisoner, (we beg the Major's pardon) was indicted thus:

The persons for our Lord the King, on their oaths present, That JAMES GEORGE HARROLD, otherwise SEMPLE, otherwise KENNEDY, &c. &c. &c. whereas in truth and in fact it ought to have run thus:

The jurors for our Lord the King, on their oaths present, That JAMES SEMPLE, otherwise HARROLD, otherwise KENNEDY, &c. &c. &c. because his real name being SEMPLE, that name ought to have taken the lead, and the Alias's, like so many other horses that

that have started for the King's plate, been whip-ped in for the sweepstakes only.

But his counsel having been successful in this motion, made another, which unfortunately failed. The indictment having, by order of court, been quashed, he moved that Mr. Semple be DISCHARGED. The Recorder, however, demurred to this motion, by saying, That on discussing the form of an indictment, the court never go into the merits; that as a grand jury had thought proper to say the prisoner had been guilty of felony, it would be a breach of duty in the court to suffer him to go at large till that question was tried.

He therefore ordered Major Semple to be taken thence to the place from whence he came, and to be detained in his Majesty jail of Newgate till the next sessions, when the prosecutor might have an opportunity of preferring a fresh bill, and then alter the form of the indictment.

It was hinted besides, that there were several other indictments against him for *frauds*, which were of themselves strong enough to detain him.

The counsel then observed that he should advise his client to plead and take his trial; but after some consideration, that intention was dropped, and the Major taken from the bar, bowing three times as he retired.

We ought here to observe, that we cannot possibly mean any the most distant reflection on the gentleman

gentleman, who was Major Semple's counsel, Mr. Agar, by adopting the term "Little Bailey." It would hurt us, not a little, should he so conceive it. We know his liberality of sentiment, and that he will readily pardon a little of the Old Bailey wit. Indeed, to do him justice, he distinguished himself much to his credit, and with a modesty that discovered as much the characteristics of a gentleman, as with a learning that displayed his abilities as a lawyer. We know his manners in private life to be amiable; and we have no doubt, by application, he will very soon be an equal ornament to his profession as he is already to society.

Disappointed, therefore, in concluding the life of Major Semple with his trial ~~now~~; we hope the recesses will afford us an opportunity of making the delay agreeable, by treating our readers in the mean time with a few more anecdotes.

Our

Our hopes are accomplished; the following interesting particulars have been handed to us by several respectable persons, who have had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Semple upon various occasions; all, however, in a way that has extended his fame as an adept in the art of deception.

Of the outline of Mr. Semple's origin, and introduction into life, though the leading features were exact, yet the nicer traits were something imperfect; but not materially so. Time, however, has offered us opportunity not only to correct them, but also to make the following additions to his history.

Instead of his father having been a tide-waiter, he was a surveyor in the customs at Scotland; a degree of difference in point of situation, which tends as materially to ennoble Mr. G. Semple, as much as if we had called him a journeyman to the finisher of the law when we should have properly styled John Ketch, Esquire.

Another little error crept also into our biographical account. Instead of the lady, whose misfortune it was to call herself after the name of the gentleman who has the honour to act so capital a figure in these memoirs, being a relation to the Duchess of Kingston, she was only her God-daughter: a circumstance we should not have thought material enough to have mentioned, had not a very correct

historian

historian suggested it to us, and advised us to be minute in so important a particular.

Again. Instead of Baron Hompusch being a Russian, he is a German nobleman; which, perhaps, makes small degree of difference in point of antiquity. Instead, also, of his having been resident at Brussels, it was at Cologne he first had the honour of Mr. Semple's introducing himself to him.

Having, therefore, critically corrected these errors, we beg leave to say a little more respecting Mr. Semple's first introduction into this great metropolis, where abilities like his have a wide field to display themselves in, and where industry never can be in want of a guinea.

The situation of Mr. Semple's father had been naturally such, as to bring him to the knowledge of a certain gentleman, who was intimate with a Scotch merchant, who was acquainted with an attorney, or rather writer at Edinburgh, who was the friend of a gentleman who was very well acquainted with one of the lords of Trade, now one of the lords of his Majesty's Bed-chamber, who was an intimate friend of one of the directors of the East India Company.

Now it so happened, that there was such a good understanding between that certain gentleman, that Scotch merchant, and the lawyer, who transacted the business of the said lord, that the writer, upon the first application, declared that young

Semple *should* have a place in the East India Company's service abroad.

Upon this absolute promise from such a great man, the elder Semple equipped James George with all proper materials for such a journey to the East; not forgetting the requisites necessary to convey him to London, where he supposed he had nothing to do but to call on the chairman of that company and receive his appointment.

Notwithstanding, however, that a absolute promise, young Semple found some little difficulty in obtaining it; and, being a *bon vivant*, he exhausted his resources with a facility that soon compelled him to have recourse to the old man for a fresh supply, under the pretence of the necessary extravagance he was compelled to live at in London.

Having obtained a supply, he dissipated that with as much speed as he had done his former finances; and whilst his applications at the East-India House, and attendance there, should have been renewed with hourly vigour, his only study was to adorn his sweet person, and commence fine gentleman. The laziness of his life soon led him into company, capable of completing his utmost wishes, and all ideas of venturing so dangerous a voyage and climate were as soon exploded.

Gay life and gay company speedily brought on unhappy projects to support it. It was to this inadvertent step in the elder Semple, of intrusting his

his son as his own master in a town, where the utmost resolution and fortitude are too often ineffectual security against vice and debauchery, that the younger Semple owes his ruin. It was more highly criminal in him, as he knew the natural bent of his son's inclinations. Let us pity, therefore, whilst we condemn; though, at the same time, the inadvertence of a father is no apology for the immoralities of a son.

After he had married into the before-mentioned family, and his way of life had so disgusted the lady's parents, that they never would consent to see him, they offered to settle upon her 200l. per ann. if she would quit her husband. But such is the prevalence of passion in the female part of the creation, that they are not only blind to their own interests, but to the defects and vices of him, who, unhappily, chances to be the God of their idolatry,

Mrs. Semple then refused the offer; but at length, wearied with habitual enormities, she has consented to remove herself entirely out of his reach. Not thinking herself safe in England, where she could be pestered with his visits and applications, she wisely chose to retire to a spot where the singularity of his adventures has foreclosed all ideas of disturbance. She is now at Calais; where Mr. Semple, for a long time past, has not ventured to make his appearance, and for a reason which to him was a very formidable one. He had already experienced the pleasures of three years imprisonment

imprisonment in Calais gaol; and, not desirous of revisiting his old habitation, very wisely omitted that sea-port in his latter visit to the continent.

The university of Oxford also has had the honour of Mr. Semple's being a member of their county gaol for debt; where he remained only five days, and was then matriculated.

We have already mentioned his lodgings at Mr. Lock's, and decamping from thence without condescending to recollect a little circumstance that all persons, who let lodgings, consider as a very material one, viz. paying the rent: and as Major Semple had, soon after that march, the honour of making a figure in a public newspaper, we should neither do our readers nor the Major justice, to let slip so favourable an opportunity of laying before them the following small notice which chance has luckily thrown into our hands.

“ IF J. G. Semple, who left his lodgings at
 “ Daniel Lock's, No. 17, Upper Marybone-
 “ street, near Portland Chapel, does not fetch the
 “ trunk away which he left there, in 14 days from
 “ this date the same will be appraised and sold.

“ Witness my hand, DANIEL LOCK.
 “ May 29, 1786.”

It was impossible for us not to avail ourselves of so authentic a document, however trifling; but the more material instances of his abilities, which, like

the

the Splendour of an eastern Bulse, annihilate the faint radiance of a Bristol stone, totally eclipse all such petty efforts of occasional genius.

From the circumstance of Baron Hompusch having introduced him to Mr. Chancellor Pitt, Mr. Semple struck out a line of ingenuity which seldom or never failed of success. He took the freedom, as one gentleman might readily do with another, of writing to Mr. Pitt; and in one of these letters hinted a scheme which, he said, would be serviceable to the kingdom, desiring to know when Mr. Pitt would do him the honour of an audience.

Having obtained answers, which was all that Mr. Semple thought necessary for the good of his country, he took that natural advantage of it, which less ambitious minds might be excused for. He boasted of his acquaintance and intimacy with Mr. Pitt, readily shewed his letters, and also letters from Dr. Prettyman, and made himself of that consequence which he knew the weaker part of the world readily bowed down to.

The first instance we have on record of his making use of his correspondence, is on the 19th of December, in the year 1785, at Doncaster in Yorkshire.—We have not learnt the particulars how he got there, whether it was in a journey to Scotland, or from it; nor how he introduced himself to the gentleman who gave credit to that correspondence: but the fact is, he did introduce himself, and the introduction answered his then purpose.

purpose. The ingenious tale too, which he fabricated to complete his purpose, we are also strangers to; but the following letter, which a very fortunate accident put into our possession, exhibits so very pleasing and humorous a picture, and is also accompanied with such a farcastic turn, that we insert it *litera scriptis*, as the best explanation of our gentleman's address.

Doncaster July 20th 1786

Goodwth world of galibet (among others) of oldsmth Yorkshire

IT was my intention in April last to have done myself the Honor of paying my respects to you or to have attempted it at W B Blands Esq^r N^o 24 Queen Anns street West London—But truly as you say by your address to the publick in the Morning Chronicle of 17th dated 15 instant

Various Acc^s then circulating—made me defer adding trouble to my so readily being duped by you the 19th Dec^r 1785—For 7½ Guineas

“ You confess there are people who may with reason complain, of you, And do add “ I declare I will do my endeavor to settle as soon as possible all the demands against me.” Who'd it was known to this House Ellison Cooke & Co when to expect it. Can you remember all that pass'd—And where the James Semple poisoned himself! who I mention'd to you had Swindled me in 1777—Its a long time since—Forgive me if I trouble you with some more particulars of this Last matter James Semple (so like your writing I've no doubt the very same person as wrote J. G Semple) “ York 24 Oct^r 1777 pay Mr Tho^r Swan 5 G^s address'd

to

to Mr. Veach Mer^t Broad Street Golden Square London" When this made its way to Town the Acc^t was Mr Swann was Swindled—Don't you think such Villains deserve Hanging Mr Semple? May all such only meet their deserts—And *some Folks* might not have had the trouble to live so long—as ever to experience any disagreeable trial to pay debts—so long dishonorably contracted—Judge you by the enclos'd—And at least if not for both or *all three Se i miles*! not forgetting your very serious promise *Words in dec^t* Last do something worthy yourself and my advertising you in the Morning Chronicle, or any paper you chuse—That you have discharged the 5 & 7 Guineas & $\frac{1}{2}$ at our Bankers Mess^{rs} R & F Gosling you may remember you took their names down in December Last— You may depend upon my doing every generous act towards you in return—But as I greatly fear the pleasing side—for myself—Will not do that to myself—I truly wish every VILLAIN had administer'd to him—Twelve Guineas & $\frac{1}{2}$ payment wou'd be more agreeable to receive than to join in the prosecuting the once so Intimate Friend of our GREAT Mr Pitt & his secretary Mr Smith —But wch I shall have a pleasure in doing—If your Friends want help who have got you into such obligations as you express to the Lord Mayor and City Marshall.

My name already you have herein.

It appears, by the foregoing letter, that a Mr. Semple had paid his respects to the gentleman nine years ago; and, by the present Mr. Semple's account, had poisoned himself. What the gentleman's opinion was of the two Sofia's may be easily guessed by his interrogation, *Don't you think such villains deserve hanging, Mr. Semple?*

It must be also observed, that although the gentleman gave himself the trouble of addressing Mr. Semple on the subject, which is easily seen was since his unlucky confinement, such address was not the result of any the most distant idea of being refunded the foregoing sum, but from the pleasing satisfaction of reminding Mr. Semple that the matter was not totally forgot, and that he was not entirely a stranger to his present place of abode.

Indeed, the gentleman's good wishes towards Mr. Semple are by no means so favourable as his calamitous circumstances may require, as he promises him, if his friends want help, he shall have a pleasure in assisting them.

We have hitherto traced Mr. Semple's abilities in preying upon the purses of his friends; but that qualification was infinitely inferior to his merit in preying upon the peace of mind and happiness of two gentlemen, who had the honour of his acquaintance.

It has been noticed already that he made his application to Baron Hompusch on the ground of having fought two duels himself, and killed both his men; but he was more fortunate in the following event.

When he was at Spa, there happened to be a quarrel between two real gentlemen, with whom Mr. Semple associated, and he was the go-between in the dispute. To each party, though he undertook the office of a mediator, he aggravated the expressions

expressions of the one, and thereby inflamed the mind of the other. This diversion of Mr. Semple's produced a duel; and the consequence was, that one of his friends was wounded: but when a reconciliation and explanation ensued, Mr. Semple thought proper, in order to avoid manual chastisement, to abdicate the place.

Mr. Semple was also once at Derby, and had introduced himself to several gentlemen as the confidential and bosom friend of Mr. Pitt, Dr. Prettyman, Mr. Rose, Mr. Lepine, and others who have the management of the various departments of his Majesty's treasury. By producing of some letters, which he had artfully extorted from some of those gentlemen, he had made himself a man of no small consequence in that country. But his application to Mr. Bailey, who is in the commission of the peace for that county, likewise a gentleman of independent fortune, and, what is still far superior, a most respectable character, was founded on another claim.

Mr. Semple waited on Mr. Bailey, and told him that, from his well-known and established character for liberal feelings towards gentlemen who may have occasion for temporary supplies, and are by accident deprived of the means of prosecuting their journies, he, although a perfect stranger, took the liberty of waiting on Mr. Bailey to request his assistance.

The pretence he made use of to Mr. Bailey for

this temporary supply was, his having left his pocket-book behind him, which he had not discovered till he had reached Derby; that he was going into Scotland, not only on a visit to his friends, the family of Lisle, but also to marry a young lady of exceeding large fortune; and that his cash was expended, by which accident he was stuck fast at Derby; and having no friend there whom he knew, made this his apology for the application to Mr. Bailey.

His person, address, and consequential letters, gave him a credit in the eye of Mr. Bailey, who readily lent him 25l. for which he returned that gentleman the full and sufficient security of his promissory note.

We hardly need say, that it was never redeemed; but when Mr. Semple had the honour of being conducted to the domicil of our sovereign lord the king, and to cut so conspicuous a figure in our public prints, Mr. Bailey by that means discovering the Major's abode, indorsed the note over to Sir Sampson Wright, of the public office Bow-street, who has been so unkind as to lodge a detainer against Mr. Semple in the shape and form of a debt.

Now, though the foregoing sum of money, thus borrowed of Mr. Bailey, was obtained in a manner that most assuredly comes under the 30th of Geo. 2, and is clearly and unequivocally a fraud, if the pretence made use of by Mr. Semple could be proved

proved false; yet the *onus probandi* being thrown by law on Mr. Bailey, it would be next to impossible for him to prove that the Major had not left his pocket-book behind him, and that he had not expended all his cash, that he was not going on a matrimonial expedition to Scotland to be united to a lady of large fortune.

Mr. Bailey, therefore, not being able to prove the *negative*, it was out of his power to put the Major to the trouble of proving the *affirmative*; (two words, by the bye, on which are founded every legal pursuit, and every species of art and chicanery in the prosecution of it) he took the only remedy he had to try to recover his property; and no doubt very reluctantly, for we have every reason to think, that had Mr. Bailey had it in his power to have proceeded otherwise, he would gladly have relinquished the prosecution in the shape of a *debt*, and done justice to his country by adopting a prosecution for a *fraud*.

We are in possession also of another, but a still more ingenious, adventure of his, in an excursion from the north to town. He came to an inn on the road in a post-chaise; and it being about two o'clock, P. M. he said it was too soon for dinner, but whilst the landlord was roasting a fowl, he would amuse himself by viewing the church, &c.

The fowl was accordingly spitted; but it happening that the boy who drove Mr. Semple to the above inn, had a sweetheart in the same place, he

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left his horses to the care of the hostler, whilst he went to pay his respects to his Dulcinea, at the farther end of the town.

As the driver was standing at the door talking with the lady, he saw a post-chaise coming along; and having the curiosity to see who was therein, was very much surprised to find the gentleman he had just sat down at one inn, in a post-chaise belonging to another. But what appeared still more surprizing was, he had not received his master's fare; and, what was still worse, his own customary compliment. It was in vain for the Major to draw back and secrete himself. The boy ran back to the inn, and told the circumstance, when the master ordered two horses to be saddled; and, at the end of two stages, the landlord and boy accosted Mr. Semple very rudely indeed, and insisted on his going before a magistrate.

When they arrived at his worship's, the complaint was formally laid; and the Major being asked what he had to say for himself, he ran through lineage even from the year 1547, when the title of Lord Viscount Lisle became extinct, to the very hour in which he was entitled to it; leaving out all the hairbreadth escapes, disasters, chances, &c.

Having done this he quitted the pedigree, but with equal hauteur harangued on his importance to government. He declared himself the bosom friend of Mr. Pitt; said he was on his Majesty's service with expresses of the most important and serious

serious nature to this kingdom; that he had exhausted all his cash; that he would compel every innkeeper on the road to furnish him with horses and chaise; and dared the magistrate or landlord to molest or detain him.

The authoritative style and manner in which he delivered himself, and the production of his *corps de reserve*, Mr. Pitt's letters, produced an effect, that not only answered his utmost purpose, but produced more, much more, than Mr. Semple expected.

The magistrate, whose good wishes towards government greatly inclined him to favour every thing that had the least smack of it, was determined not to put a spoke into the wheels of it. He took Mr. Semple, therefore, into his private room, and not only told him he would pay the chaise, but actually offered Mr. Semple a sufficient sum of money to enable him to come to town; which offer the Major accepted, with a profusion of acknowledgments, and pursued his journey. And thus ended an exploit, which we dismiss without a comment. One fact we must take notice of: the landlord was by far better off than the justice; he was not only paid for his chaise, but the fowl, and even for the two post-horses which were used in the pursuit; whilst the other never knew where or how to recover a shilling. The postboy, however, with a crown in one hand, and his hat in the other, with

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a very low bow heartily wished his honor a good journey to London.

A circumstance which happened during the course of Mr. Semple's lucubrations, between his servant and the lady to whom Mr. S. thought proper, *pro tempore*, to lend that name, may not be altogether unentertaining; at least it will vary the scene, and afford a relaxation from that continual string on which we have already for a considerable time so very loudly thrummed.

In page 26, we mentioned his being at Mr. Careless's, White Hart, Watford. It was there that the gentlewoman who made use of the name of Semple, and every other name which the gentleman of that name had occasionally complimented her with, was detected in an amour with her own serving man, John Winter, by no less a personage than the Major himself. The consequence was a mutual discharge of manual compliments and services. The lady knelt for forgiveness, and the Major's tenderness granted it.

But this was not all that attended Mr. Semple there; his unlucky stars distressed him still further. His bag and baggage were detained by Mr. Careless, and conveyed into the hands of Sir Sampson Wright: letters from Mr. Pitt, &c. &c. were discovered, with a pile of others, that made Offa like a wart. They have been transmitted into the hands of Lord Sydney, the secretary of state, and we are afraid, for ever irretrievable; unless

it should be thought proper, in mercy to mankind, to suffer a history to be published, which would astonish the world.

When we make use of so large an expression as the world, we do not mean to confine ourselves to a circumference of three miles, as Goldsmith's midwife did, who had never been farther in her life, had lain all the farmer's wives in that circle, and boasted of her knowledge of the world; nor do we mean a circle of a little larger magnitude, viz, that of Great Britain and our town of Berwick-upon-Tweed; but we mean an extent still more spacious, which the following letter will best explain.

S P A, July 4, 1786,

SIR,

ON my return to this place from Prussia, I should think myself negligent did I not convey my respects to you by the earliest intelligence, and to acquaint you that I suffered much in my health, which I thank God is now much improved, no thanks to the party that occasioned it. I have been at Bonn on the Rhine; and if famous S—— is ever seen there again, he is a prisoner for life, as he is more notorious in that place than in London, and ~~THROUGHOUT THE CONTINENT~~. Mr. Heathcote has detained the carriage, and put his arms on it, and the banker has got both his cloaths and mine.

When at Bonn, Lambert's father and mother were unhappy beyond expression relative to the boy. If you could give

give me the least hint of him to satisfy the parents, you would do them a singular piece of charity.

I am, Sir,

Your most devoted humble servant,

JOHN WINTER.

The reader will excuse us putting the address, as we have not the consent of the gentleman so to do.

Mr. Heathcote, the gentleman mentioned in the above letter, is in some ministerial capacity from the English court; and, according to the custom of the country, seized the carriage, for the use of those to whom it more properly belonged.

At Hamburgh, he contrived to get himself introduced to Mr. Matthias, the envoy; and by the means of that introduction to recommend himself to Mr. Matthias, in Scotland-yard, treasurer to her Majesty. Mr. J. G. Semple accompanied Mr. Matthias one evening to Covent-Garden house; and under pretence of having changed his breeches, and left his purse behind him, he obtained five guineas of Mr. Matthias.

It would not have been extraordinary had this matter rested singly; but on some other pretence he obtained an equal sum of the same gentleman.

Being at Egham, he contrived to make himself acquainted with Dr. Ogilvie, a very worthy divine of that place; and having so done, and found by that

that means the tradesmen and others with whom the doctor dealt, Mr. Semple obtained credit of various people. Having also been seen arm in arm with the doctor at Windsor, wherever the latter went into a shop the Major went afterwards, and got goods of some and cash of others.

Of Mr. Gulliver, of the Duke's-Head, Belfont, near Hounslow, he obtained the sum of 10*l.* and gave Mr. Gulliver the same valuable security for it, as he had before given to Mr. Bailey, of Hope. But, in order to convince the reader that there could be no external appearance of poverty, we must tell him, that the Major cut a dash at Belfont; for he had servants in livery, and a carriage which he called his own: but he never thought proper to put up at the Duke's-Head after the above affront bestowed on him by Mr. Gulliver, when Mr. Semple usurped the name of Major Cunningham.

But his ingenuity was not so circumscribed as to be limited to feasts upon gentlemen who do not know the world: the gentlemen of the law, who are supposed to know most of it, experienced his address in the art of extracting gold out of the purse.

Mr. Gapper, of the Temple, accommodated him with forty pounds; and Mr. Parker, of Halifax, with fifty.

He was not, however, quite so successful with

Mr. Bell, bookseller, of the Strand; under pretence of being employed by the ministry; he applied for a considerable sum of money, for conveying intelligence for the use of the Morning Post; adding, he was going on an embassy with dispatches to Germany, intrusted to him by Lord Shelburne, which contained a secret negociation with the Emperor.

In this instance he was not quite a match for Mr. Bell; but in a few days after, when that gentleman was out, he called at the shop, and borrowed half a guinea, pretending he was arrested. The Major's honour still stands unredeemed at Mr. Bell's. It turned out, however, that Mr. Semple advanced the truth; for he was then actually in the custody of Mr. Charles Hyndes, officer to the sheriff of Middlesex.

Having said thus much of him, we shall conclude our narrative with a stroke of his policy after confinement.

When he was removed from the Compter to Newgate, and the turnkey was dressing the Major with an ornament to his silk stockings, he begged that a gentleman of his character and importance might not be so disgraced. That he was treated like a gentleman at the former prison, where he had behaved himself like a gentleman also, having slipped five guineas into the turnkey's hand.

This,

This, however, being a falsehood, and, instead of having behaved himself like a gentleman, he had left the Compter a few shillings in the debt of a poor old washerwoman, the turnkey of Newgate was deaf to his importunity, and ornamented his leg with a chain of that construction and enormous weight, which we often see hanging at the fobs of many of our modern fops.

(77)

THE Trial of James George Semple,

alias Harrold, &c. &c.

ON Saturday the second of September 1786, the PRISONER was put to the bar, and arraigned before Mr. Justice Gould and the Recorder of London. The indictment stated, that James George Semple, otherwise Harrold, otherwise Kennedy, did on the first day of September 1785, of Richard Lycett, coachmaker, one chaise, commonly called a post-chaise, of the value of fifty pounds, *feloniously steal, take, and carry away* against the peace, &c.

The *alias dictus* having been added, in this indictment, to the substantive name, and no other objection being made thereto, Mr. Lycett was called, who swore

That he was a coachmaker in Whitechapel, and let out carriages for hire; and that he knew the prisoner perfectly well. That on the first day of September, in the year 1785, the prisoner came to his house, and hired a post-chaise for three weeks or a month, for which he was to pay five shillings per day; that the prisoner had the carriage delivered to his order, which carriage Mr. Lycett never had the pleasure of seeing again, nor

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the prisoner, till Mr. Lycett saw him in confinement in the Poultry Compter.

Mr. Lycett further swore, that the prisoner came to him recommended from the Saracen's-Head, Aldgate, where he then lodged. That he had hired a carriage of him once before, which was on the 10th of July preceding, for six shillings a day, which he returned on the sixteenth, and paid for

That the carriage which the prisoner had the second time, and for which he then stood indicted, was by the prisoner's direction altered, by having pistol holsters put to it, and a net to the roof, with the platform reduced to the size of the Major's trunk.

He also swore, that the prisoner told him that the carriage was wanted for a tour to the north; that it was delivered on the same day to a servant of Mr. Bolton's, John Deacon, who keeps the Saracen's-Head Inn; that it was three weeks or a month for which it was hired, and that it was to be returned in that time.

That he had never heard from him afterwards; that he was sure the prisoner at the bar was the same person, and had not the least doubt of it. That there was no agreement to sell the chaise, or to keep it longer than three or four weeks, and then pay fifty-two guineas for it; but that the prisoner said,

‘ Suppose I should have a mind to buy it, what would you offer? ’

“would it be worth?” to which Mr. Lycett replied, ‘About fifty-two guineas,’ but that there was a sale, either absolutely or conditionally, Mr. Lycett positively denied.

He added also, that, unfortunately for him, this was not the chaise the prisoner had first spoke about; the chaise he obtained was almost a new one; the other, which the prisoner had before, and which he had then let to a gentleman for three or four days, was an old one.

The Recorder of London, who tried the prisoner, then put the following questions to Mr. Lycett.

Did you part with the chaise with any expectation of the prisoner’s being a purchaser? to which Mr. Lycett replied, By no means.

The evident meaning of the above question was, to shew what was in the contemplation of the parties at the actual time of the prisoner’s hiring the carriage; for if there had been any idea of a purchase, the felony would have been instantly reduced to a simple debt.

Mr. Lycett then underwent a very long and critical cross examination from Mr. Garrow, who was concerned for the prisoner as his counsel.

Mr. Lycett produced his book, at the request of the counsel; when it appeared that the prisoner had obtained the first chaise under the name of Major Harrold.

It appeared also, that after the name Harrold, there had been an erasure, on which erasure stood

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the name of Semple; and being interrogated strictly on this point, Mr. Lycett said that he put down every name which he had heard the prisoner had went by; that there were three or four names at times put down, one of which had been the Marquis of Carmarthen; and that he put every name down till he had got the right one, which he discovered about three quarters of a year ago, at a Mr. Sadgrove's, a hair-dresser, at Knightsbridge, with whom the prisoner had lodged.

He was then asked, if he had not called the prisoner a damned scoundrel, and said that he would arrest him for 50l. The former part of the question Mr. Lycett readily acknowledged, but positively denied the latter.

Mr. Lycett, in his cross examination, further said, that he never gave the prisoner a bill of 50l. for the chaise, nor ever sued out any writ against him: that his servant, John Marchant, delivered the chaise to Deacon: that the prisoner behaved in a fine flourishing and polished manner; and that he should have rested very happy if the carriage had been ever returned. He denied ever receiving a bank-note of ten pounds in part of the carriage, and said that his own pocket suffered for the prosecution; however, he thought it right to punish such offenders.

Mr. Garrow then made an ingenuous supposition, that where the erasure stood in the book, there had been wrote " or to pay fifty guineas;" but this Mr. Lycett positively denied.

John Marchant, apprentice to Mr. Lycett, proved delivering the carriage to Deacon: and Deacon proved fetching it away from Mr. Lycett's. But although it appeared that Deacon had drove the prisoner once to Barnet and back, and took him up at Sadgrove's in Knightsbridge, and drove him to Uxbridge, from thence to the Duke of Portland's at Bulstrode and back to town, yet this witness could not swear to the prisoner. On his first standing up to give his evidence, he desired to know who was to pay him for his trouble and loss of time; for which he was severely reprimanded by the court.

Mr. Bolton proved that the prisoner had been a customer of his in the name of Harrold; that he went with him to Lycett's when the carriage was hired; and that he knew nothing of any bargain but that of hiring.

Mr. Silvester, who was for the prosecutor, being but just come into court, asked Mr. Bolton, If the carriage was purchased or hired? To which Mr. Bolton replied, Hired.

The evidence being closed, Mr. Garrow addressed the court in a very long speech, to shew cause why the prisoner should not be put on his defence, as the fact stated to the court made it only a debt, and not a felony.

He cited many cases, or rather construed many cases, in a way contrary to their constructions; and mended the fact of hiring with the supposed con-

ditional

ditional purchase, on which he argued a considerable while, till the Recorder stopped him, and desired him to confine his argument to the hiring, as the purchase was denied, and said it was the province of the jury to determine what the contract was. Judge Gould entirely coincided with the Recorder.

Mr. Agat said a few words on the same side as Mr. Garrow, and called the prosecution an extraordinary conversion of a mere Westminster-Hall business to the bar of the Old Bailey.

Mr. Silvester was going to reply, when the Recorder stopped him, and said he need not give himself any trouble on the subject.

The prisoner being then called on for his defence, said, that he BOUGHT the chaise of Mr. Lycett, and had given him a ten pound bank-note in part.

Mr. Lycett being asked, said, The Major had flourished his hand about in his pockets, and jingled some money, but he never saw either cash or notes.

Mr. James Sadgrove was called on the part of the prisoner, who swore that Mr. Lycett had told him he had let Major Harrold a post-chaise on trial, and, that if he liked it, he was to give him fifty-two guineas for it. Sadgrove acknowledged, on his cross examination, that some gentlemen had been with him from the prisoner.

Mr.

Mr. Lycett most positively denied any such conversation; but owned that, not being a lawyer, he could not tell whether or no, if he could have then found the Major, he should not have arrested him.

The Recorder, with that impartiality and fairness which has ever distinguished his judicial character, and with a discrimination which reflects equal merit on his abilities, summed up the evidence; the principal point of which was, Whether they believed there was a simple and bare hiring, or a hiring and purchase conditionally. If they were of the former opinion, they must find the prisoner guilty; if of the latter, they ought to acquit.

The Jury, in a few minutes returned their verdict—*Guilty*.

The Recorder then asked them, Whether they founded their verdict on the evidence given by Mr. Lycett, or that of Sadgrove; in other words, said he, Do you believe Mr. Lycett or Sadgrove? To which they replied, Mr. Lycett.

And thus ended the trial of a genius who has excited as much curiosity as his depredations have caused alarm; and for one of which the sentence of the law condemns him to transportation for seven years.

John N. H. S.

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